

ROMANESQUE PATRONS AND PROCESSES

ROUTLEDGE



Edited by Jordi Camps, Manuel Castiñeiras,
John McNeill and Richard Plant

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Design and Instrumentality in the Art and Architecture of Romanesque Europe

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THE ROLE OF KINGS AND BISHOPS IN THE INTRODUCTION OF ROMANESQUE ART IN NAVARRE AND ARAGON

Javier Martínez de Aguirre

INTRODUCTION

The pre-Romanesque church of San Miguel de Villatuerta in Navarre is known for its relief carvings, which, according to currently accepted opinion, represent the ceremony of the blessing of troops marching into battle.¹ The *ordo* on which this is based dates from Visigothic times and underscores the principle of cooperation between bishops and kings in military ventures. The location of the reliefs seems to be related to the strategic importance of the site. It is halfway between Pamplona, the capital, and Nájera, the second city of the kingdom, near the ford where Abd-al-Rahman III's troops had attacked in the years 920 and 924. The inscription (Figure 5.1) extols the importance of Bishop Velasco, who governed the diocese of Pamplona in the decade around 970.² He is easily identified by his mitre and crosier and is mounted on a galloping horse. However, despite the mention of *Sancto re*, referring to Sancho Garcés II, King of Pamplona from 970 to 994, there is no equivalent representation among the roughly carved figures that can be identified with the monarch. It was the reliefs that saved this church from falling into oblivion. It wasn't noted for its architectural innovation or aspirations and, as far as we know, produced no imitators. The reliefs reflect the military vocation that predominated in the nascent kingdom of Pamplona and united the destinies of the crown and the mitre. The much greater size of the text referring to the bishop in the inscription and the greater prominence of the figure of the prelate suggest that it was he who was responsible for its construction. In this respect, Villatuerta sets a modest precedent for the joint presence of kings and bishops in architectural projects in Pyrenean lands.

The introduction of Romanesque architecture in the eleventh century similarly involved cooperation between kings and bishops on important buildings. I will analyse this in detail by focusing attention on three buildings of particular significance: the Abbey of Leire (Navarre) and the Cathedrals of Jaca (Aragon) and Pamplona (Navarre).

LEIRE: SANCHO THE KING AND SANCHO THE BISHOP

Our perspectives on the origins of Romanesque in the western Pyrenees are clouded by the relative importance of the Kingdoms of Aragon and Navarre in the later Middle Ages. Before the year 1000 there were no examples in these lands of Christian buildings that were greater than 25 m long or were vaulted throughout. Given that backdrop, the interest shown by Pamplonese sovereigns in enlarging the abbey church of San Salvador of Leire (Navarre) takes on a special significance, as exemplified in a document recording a donation by Sancho IV to the monastery on the occasion of the 1057 consecration of its church (Figure 5.2).³ The young king, then just eighteen years old, had succeeded to the throne three years earlier, following the unexpected death of his father, García III while fighting Ferdinand I of Castile (García's brother). The donation commemorates the dead king and makes it known that the entire royal family was anxious to see the church finished.⁴ Bear in mind, however, that Sancho IV did not attend the ceremony as patron but as a guest of the bishop, John.⁵

Knowledge of the historical context suggests the enlargement of the church was due to the grandfather of Sancho IV, the famous Sancho III the Great (1004–1035), and not his son, García III (1035–1054). There are no chronicles or documents to link these monarchs with the building, and the monastery itself instead acknowledges the figure of Sancho III's grandfather, Sancho II, who had probably been buried there. His imaginary coat of arms decorates a keystone of the Gothic vault.⁶ However, there is no doubt Sancho III had the motive, opportunity and means to promote such an ambitious construction. This cannot be said of his successor, who was more interested in Santa María de Nájera. But, did Sancho III actually intervene? And, if so, in what way did he participate?

In early studies on the architecture of Leire, authors such as Madrazo, Bertaux, and Lampérez dated the Romanesque east end (Figure 5.3) to the time of Sancho

- ⁵⁹ Toubert, *Art dirigé* (as n. 44), 187–88.
- ⁶⁰ L. García-Guijarro Ramos, 'El papado y el reino de Aragón en la segunda mitad del siglo XI', *Aragón en la Edad Media. XVIII* (Zaragoza 2004), 245–64.
- ⁶¹ P. Kehr, *Papsturkunden in Spanien. Vorarbeiten zur Hispania Pontificia II. Navarra und Aragon* (Berlin 1928), 265–67; A. Ubieta Arteta, 'La introducción del rito romano en Aragón y en Navarra', *Hispania Sacra*, 1 (1948), 311–13; F. Balaguer, 'Los límites del obispado de Aragón y el concilio de Jaca de 1063', *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón. 4* (Zaragoza 1950), 119–21; Durán, *Iglesia* (as n. 36), 30–32; Buesa, *Sancho Ramírez* (as n. 52), 152–54.
- ⁶² Goñi, *Obispos* (as n. 14), 224–27.
- ⁶³ Durán, *Iglesia* (as n. 36), 51.
- ⁶⁴ Durán, *Iglesia* (as n. 36), 38–40. The document (with a Spanish translation) was published by D. Sangorrín y Diest-Garcés, *El Libro de la Cadena del Concejo de Jaca. Documentos Reales, Episcopales y Municipales de los siglos X, XI, XII, XIII y XIV* (Zaragoza 1920), 63–73.
- ⁶⁵ A. García-Gallo de Diego, 'El Concilio de Coyanza. Contribución al estudio del Derecho Canónico español en la Alta Edad Media', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho español*, 20 (1950), 290.
- ⁶⁶ Buesa, *Sancho Ramírez* (as n. 52), 160. The memorial was published by P. Kehr, 'Cómo y cuándo' (as n. 52), 321–26.
- ⁶⁷ Durán, *Iglesia* (as n. 36), 45–51; Buesa, *Sancho Ramírez* (as n. 52), 158–64.
- ⁶⁸ Gavira, *Episcopologios* (as n. 41), 48–53; Durán, *Iglesia* (as n. 36), 51–52.
- ⁶⁹ C. Orcástegui Gros, *Crónica de San Juan de la Peña (Versión aragonesa). Edición crítica* (Zaragoza 1986), 36–37. Ubieta, 'Introducción' (as n. 61), 308–09.
- ⁷⁰ The pope referred to these seven bishops in a letter of 1074. A. Durán Gudiol, 'El traslado de las reliquias de san Indalecio a San Juan de la Peña', *Argensola: Revista de Ciencias Sociales del Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses*, 109 (1995), 13–24.
- ⁷¹ M.C. Díaz y Díaz, *Libros y librerías en La Rioja altomedieval* (Logroño 1979), 319–20. The reliquary was placed between the two main altars of the church.
- ⁷² D.L. Simon, 'Daniel and Habakkuk in Aragon', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, XXXVIII (1975), 50–55.
- ⁷³ Kehr, 'Cómo y cuándo' (as n. 52), 302–03 and 319.
- ⁷⁴ P. Kehr, 'El Papado y los reinos de Navarra y Aragón hasta mediados del siglo XII', *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón. Sección de Zaragoza. Vol. II* (Zaragoza 1946), 119.
- ⁷⁵ The donation to Saint-Pons de Thomières: A. Canellas López, *La colección diplomática de Sancho Ramírez* (Zaragoza 1993), doc. 136.
- The consecration of San Juan de la Peña: A. Ubieta Arteta, *Colección diplomática de Pedro I de Aragón y Navarra* (Zaragoza 1951), doc. 16.
- ⁷⁶ Kehr, 'Cómo y cuándo' (as n. 52), 314–17.
- ⁷⁷ Goñi, *Colección* (as n. 20), docs 67, 74, 94, 95, 114, and 125.
- ⁷⁸ J. Goñi Gaztambide, 'La fecha de construcción y consagración de la Catedral románica de Pamplona', *Príncipe de Viana*, X (1949), 385–95.
- ⁷⁹ Goñi, *Obispos* (as n. 14), 254–316; M. Soria, '“Tolosae moritur, Pampilonae sepelitur”': Pierre d'Andouque, un évêque malmené', in *La imagen del obispo hispano en la Edad Media*, ed. M. Aurell and A. García de la Borbolla García de Paredes (Pamplona 2004), 167–83.
- ⁸⁰ Goñi, *Colección* (as n. 20), docs 66 and 73. The rest of the donations, in 1095, 1097 and 1103, provide no other information regarding the construction: *Ibid.*, docs 58, 65, and 101.
- ⁸¹ Ubieta, *Pedro I* (as n. 75), 203–08.
- ⁸² Goñi, *Obispos* (as n. 14).
- ⁸³ *Vite venerabilis vir ac religiosus: C. Douais. Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint Sernin de Toulouse* (Paris-Toulouse 1887), doc. 485.
- ⁸⁴ J. Martínez de Aguirre, 'Catedral de Santa María', *Enciclopedia del Románico en Navarra* (Aguilar de Campoo 2008), II, 1042–47.
- ⁸⁵ Goñi, *Obispos* (as n. 14), 297.
- ⁸⁶ M.A. Mezquíriz Irujo and M.I. Tabar Sarriás, 'Excavaciones arqueológicas en la catedral de Pamplona' *Trabajos de Arqueología Navarra*, 11 (1993–94), 310–11; eadem, *Los niveles del tiempo. Arqueología en la Catedral de Pamplona* (Pamplona 1993–94); M. Durliat, 'Le plan de la cathédrale romane de Pampelune', *Bull. mon.*, (1994), 227–28; E. Aragonés Estella, 'Época prerrománica y románica', *La Catedral de Pamplona 1394–1994* (Pamplona 1994), I, 136–40.
- ⁸⁷ J. Martínez de Aguirre, 'La iglesia catedral de Pamplona', *El arte románico en Navarra* (Pamplona 2002), 85–95; idem, 'Catedral' (as n. 84), 1038–49.
- ⁸⁸ Goñi, *Colección* (as in n. 20), doc. 85.
- ⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, docs 89 (1100–15), 120 (c. 1110) and 121 (c. 1110).
- ⁹⁰ *Adiutorium ad edificandam ipsam ecclesiam / ad dictam ecclesiam construendam: Ibid.*, docs 66 and 125.
- ⁹¹ For Roncesvalles see, M.I. Ostolaza, *Colección Diplomática de Santa María de Roncesvalles (1127–1300)* (Pamplona 1978), doc. 2. For Estella; 'cofradía de los sesenta': Goñi, *Colección* (as n. 20), doc. 345. For Santa María de Eunat, see J. Etayo, 'Información de los Prior Abbad y confres de Santa María de Onat sobre los artículos por su parte presentados contra el Rector e beneficiados de Muruçabal', *Boletín de la Comisión de Monumentos Históricos y Artísticos de Navarra*, 5 (1914), 65; J.M. Jimeno Jurío, 'Eunat y su cofradía. Ordenanzas antiguas', *Príncipe de Viana*, LVIII (1997), 87–118.